

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the telephone interview. The Examiner's courtesy and consideration of Applicant's questions and comments at the interview are sincerely appreciated. The application has been amended as necessary to more clearly and particularly describe the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 3 and 7 has been amended. Claims 10 and 11 have been added to claim additional features of the invention.

Claims 3 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hikita (U.S. Patent 6,404,181). For at least the following reasons, the Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

Hikita does not disclose or teach "wherein the first connecting portion of the first tape member comprises a locking member attachment coupled to the second end portion of the first tape member, and the second connecting portion of the first tape member comprises a locked member attachment coupled to the first end portion of the second tape member" as recited in amended claim 3.

The Office Action of 07/06/2005 refers to the connected component storage units 2 (i.e., tape-shaped component cluster 1) as an electronic part supplying tape, the engagement projection 12 of a storage unit 2 as a first connecting portion, and the coupling hole 14 of another storage unit 2 as a second connecting portion (Office Action 07/06/2005, page 2-3). The Advisory Action of 10/19/2005 further refers to the first connecting portion (i.e., engagement projections 12) and the second connecting portion (i.e., coupling holes 14) being formed by coupling a locking member attached (i.e., portions of each element 14 engaging 12 and serving as locking member attachment) to a locked member attachment (i.e., portions of each element 12 engaging 14 and serving as a locked member).

In Hikita, the engagement projections 12 of the first component storage unit are only coupled to the corresponding coupling holes 14 of the second component storage unit. The engagement projections 12 are *not coupled to an end portion* of the first component storage unit. Since the engagement projections 12 are *not coupled to an end portion* of the first component storage unit, the engagement projections 12 cannot be a locking member attachment *coupled to an end portion* member of the first component storage unit. Likewise, the coupling holes 14 of the second storage unit are *not coupled to an end portion* of the second component storage unit. Thus, Hikita does not disclose or teach a locking member attachment coupled to the first end portion of the second tape member. Hikita also does not disclose or teach a locked member attachment coupled to the second end portion of the first tape member. Therefore, Hikita does not disclose or teach all the elements of the claimed invention.

Claims 3 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hikita in view of Busler (U.S. Patent No. 3,431,548). For at least the following reasons, the Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

None of the references disclose or suggest "wherein the first connecting portion of the first tape member comprises a locking member attachment coupled to the second end portion of the first tape member, and the second connecting portion of the first tape member comprises a locked member attachment coupled to the first end portion of the second tape member" as recited in amended claim 3.

As mentioned previously, in Hikita, the engagement projections 12 of the first component storage unit are only coupled to the corresponding coupling holes 14 of the second component storage unit. The engagement projections 12 are not coupled to an end portion of the first component storage unit. The coupling holes 14 of the second storage unit are not coupled to an end portion of the second component storage unit. Thus, Hikita does not disclose or suggest a locking member

attachment coupled to the first end portion of the second tape member. Hikita also does not disclose or suggest a locked member attachment coupled to the second end portion of the first tape member.

Busler does not overcome the deficiencies of the Hikita patent. Busler discloses a carrier strip 41 with a snap member 42 that is coupled to a receptacle 44 of a second carrier strip (col. 2, lines 25-32). However, Busler does not disclose or suggest that the snap member 42 is couple to an end portion of a first carrier strip or that the receptacle 44 is coupled to an end portion of a second carrier strip. Thus, Busler does not disclose or suggest a locking member attachment coupled to the end portion of the carrier strip and a locked member attachment coupled to the end portion of another carrier strip. Therefore, even if combined, the references do not disclose or suggest all the elements of the claimed invention.

Furthermore, there is no suggestion or motivation for one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to combine Busler with Hikita to arrive at the claimed invention.

Hikita discloses tape-like component cluster 1 constructed by coupling together component storage units 2 with storage spaces 5 for storing components (col. 5, lines 54-66). The Hikita tape-like component cluster 1 may be also wound to a reel to facilitate handling (col. 9, lines 9-65). Busler discloses carrier strips 41 for carrying insulating pods P, whereby a pod is connected to the carrier strip by a piece 42 and preferably molded with the carrier strip as an integral unit (col. 2, lines 32).

Since Hikita already has a connecting structure for connecting the component storage units 2, there is no motivation or need to look at the connecting structure elements of the carrier strips in Busler. Thus, modifying the Hikita component storage units to have the connecting structure of the Busler carrier strips would not have been an obvious substitution. One skilled in the art would not have combined these references at the relevant time to arrive at the claimed invention. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the claims based upon the combination of references is respectfully requested.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Engl (DE 3311634) in view of Busler. For at least the following reasons, the Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

None of the references disclose or suggest "wherein the first connecting portion of the first tape member comprises a locking member attachment coupled to the second end portion of the first tape member, and the second connecting portion of the first tape member comprises a locked member attachment coupled to the first end portion of the second tape member" as recited in amended claim 3.

Engl discloses an additional strip part 8 that joins two belt ends 9, 10 together (Abstract). Engl does not disclose or suggest a first strip part that is formed by coupling a member attachment at the end portion of the first belt *and* a second strip part that is formed by coupling a member attachment at the end portion of the second belt. Therefore, Engl does not disclose or suggest a locking member attachment coupled to the first end portion of the second tape member and a locked member attachment coupled to the second end portion of the first tape member.

Busler does not overcome the deficiencies of the Engl reference. Busler discloses a carrier strip 41 with a snap member 42 that is coupled to a receptacle 44 of a second carrier strip (col. 2, lines 25-32). However, Busler does not disclose or suggest that the snap member 42 is couple to an end portion of a first carrier strip or that the receptacle 44 is coupled to an end portion of a second carrier strip. Thus, Busler does not disclose or suggest a locking member attachment coupled to the end portion of the carrier strip and a locked member attachment coupled to the end portion of another carrier strip. Therefore, even if combined, the references do not disclose or suggest all the elements of the claimed invention.

Furthermore, there is no suggestion or motivation for one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to combine Busler with Engl to arrive at the claimed invention.

Engl discloses an additional strip part 8 that joins two belt ends 9, 10 together (Abstract). Busler discloses carrier strips 41 for carrying insulating pods P, whereby a pod is connected to the carrier strip by a piece 42 and preferably molded with the carrier strip as an integral unit (col. 2, lines 32).

Since Engl already has a connecting structure connecting the belts 5, there is no motivation or need to look at the connecting structure elements of the carrier strips in Busler. Thus, modifying the Engl strip part to have the connecting structure of the Busler carrier strips would not have been an obvious substitution. One skilled in the art would not have combined these references at the relevant time to arrive at the claimed invention. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the claims based upon the combination of references is respectfully requested.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. 36261.

Respectfully submitted,
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